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RESEARCH NOTE:

Investigating casino event management integration: The case of East and South Asia casinos

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Abstract: *The aim of this study is to investigate the gap of event management in East and South Asia's casinos throughout the information provided by casinos on their websites. Main objective is to identify the differences and similarities of event holding in East and South Asia's casinos and suggest future directions for casino managers and event organizers. Four research questions were developed to provide ourselves a goal, as well as to further our understanding of our investigation. There are two steps to structure our study. First is to evaluate the performance of 138 casino's websites, which were obtained from worldcasinodirectory.com by using a website evaluation tool that we have constructed. In the second step, we conduct a content analysis for the website so we can identify what kind of events are organized in the area on our samples. The data of the content analysis provides a comparison of events in our sampling, such as the event's size, type, and frequency of holding an event. We believe that our research would contribute to event organizers and large scale corporations to give them an insight on the overall efficiency of websites, as well as the frequency of events around East and South Asian casinos.*

Keywords: Event, casinos, websites, content analysis, evaluation tool

JEL Classification: L83, M1, O1

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1 INTRODUCTION

Event Management has been established as one of the most recognized activities of the tourism and leisure industries. It is portrayed as an ever growing fast-paced, varied, and highly employable field (Shone and Parry, 2010; Liu et al., 2015). Events occur in any type of activity and with different volumes. One industry that we can find a plethora of events is casinos.

Casinos frequently advertise their facilities and events through their websites and although both industries are very

important for the entertainment industry nobody yet investigated how those two disciplines are interrelated. As we notice this gap on academic literature we developed a new term, which we decided to call "Casino Event Management". For this reason, the main purpose of this research is to initiate a discussion about casino event management and its objectives are to investigate how the casino website functions and how important they are for the casino management industry. Furthermore, we want to investigate the different kinds of events they advertise on their websites and to compare them. By comparing the differences and similarities

of events organized, we can find out the gaps they have. Based on that, we can provide suggestions on how they can improve and be more effective on how they prompt events through the website.

This study has practical interest for many reasons: First, it is beneficial for casino managers as they can find out what type of events are organized in other countries, and they will find new ideas of development. Apart from that, as their website have undergone evaluations, they will know what kind of problems they face and what improvements they can make. Event organizers will also find it interesting as they can use our research data during the pre-planning stage of events. Furthermore, academics will also find it interesting as this is the first study according to our knowledge who deal with this subject and it could be a starting point for further research.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

“Event management” encompasses the planning and production of all types of events, including meetings and conventions, exhibitions, festivals and other cultural celebrations, sport competitions, entertainment spectacles, private functions and numerous other special events (Getz, 2005). Event management is a relatively new academic subject and so it is reasonably straightforward to trace the emergence of the concepts and definitions of events (Berridge, 2007). Several researchers investigate how event management is developed on different concepts (Chalip & Leyns, 2002; Christou & Sigala, 2004; Lee & Taylor, 2005; Sigala & Christou, 2006; Andersson & Getz, 2008; Christou & Nella, 2010; Christou, 2003, 2011; Fourie & Santana-Gallego, 2011; Gretzel et al., 2012; Chatzigeorgiou et al., 2017) but no one investigated how it is applied in different casinos and especially in East and South Asia.

Casino management is a growing entertainment industry around the World that not only promotes tourism, but heavily influences a country's economy (Wan, 2012; Nella & Christou, 2006, 2014; Wu & Chen, 2015; Io, 2016; Valeri, 2016). Although most countries around the World have already built casinos, there are many differences in their organized events and types of customers (Fotiadis & Vassiliadis, 2012; Christou, 2015; Fotiadis, Vassiliadis, & Soteriades, 2016; Fotiadis, Vassiliadis, & Yeh, 2016; Fotiadis, Xie, Li, & Huan, 2016; Küçükaltan & Pimar, 2016; Martins, 2016). One of the methods to promote events is through their websites. Based on that and through investigations on literature, we have developed four research questions that are the following:

- Are casinos websites well-structured and developed?
- Do casino websites in East and South Asia represent well the events they organize?
- Do every casino in East and South Asia organized same events?
- What kinds of gaps are founded in casino event management?

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The four sectors in our methodology are to (1) Description of population of this study, (2) Sample selection, (3) Description of the website evaluation tool, and (4) Description of content analysis for the data gathering.

First, we used worldcasinodirectory.com, a website devoted to identifying casino around the world, to find out the population in this study. In total, we found 138 casino websites in East and South Asia (Laos = 2, Malaysia = 4, Myanmar = 3, Singapore = 2, Vietnam = 24, Cambodia = 19, Philippines = 30, Indonesia = 2, South Korea = 14, Macau = 38).

Based on that we investigated on literature to develop a website evaluation tool, and also used some articles as foundation and followed their evaluation tools to produce this website evaluation tool (Christou et al., 2004; Tan & Wei, 2006; Chatzigeorgiou et al., 2009; Blut, 2016; Ellahi & Bokhari, 2013; Vassiliadis, Fotiadis, & Piper, 2013; Hernández et al., 2016), which can help us to investigate and collect data about the casino websites regarding their usefulness, ease of use, trust, system availability, and website design. The website evaluation tool was developed based on Dickinger and Stangl (2013), Al Qeisi and Al-Abdallah (2014) and Huan (2014) studies. Then we selected specific websites as the sample in this study such as websites have event advertisement or they upload the information relate with the different events they organized. At the same time, we developed our content analysis, which was applied to focus on analyzing our sample and we also used descriptive analysis to describe each question and evaluated each item we examined in our research. Last, we attempted to combine the result of website evaluation tool and content analysis and also tried to find out gaps and problems between East and South Asia's casinos.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of our evaluation tool, Singapore, Vietnam, and Indonesia's casinos have the highest ability to organize and promote successful events among the other countries in East and South Asia. Furthermore, our data shows that Laos and the Philippines' casinos hardly organize events, and that they only host catering and banquet events. Casinos in Malaysia often host special events, but all of them do not provide wedding events. In contrast to casinos in Korea where special events are organized less often. Additionally, we discovered that Cambodia's casinos frequently hold business events, along few organized wedding events. Macau, similar to Cambodia's casinos, rarely organizes weddings. The data indicates the gaps we can see in casino events around East and South Asian casinos.

The average casino website's score that we have calculated is 25.3. Among the countries in East and South Asia, Singapore obtained the highest score with a total score of 35 out of 53. There are 3 countries with a below average score which are Vietnam, (25), Indonesia (23), and Cambodia (21.3). In conclusion, we have estimated that most of the casino websites obtained an above average score. So we consider that the greater part of casino's websites in East and South Asia are finely structured and developed.

However, we believe that most of the casinos in East and South Asia promote their events because we can discover that 73% of the casino that provides event information in detail on their websites including Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Vietnam, and Indonesia. The 5 mentioned casino websites provided the most detailed information about their events, making it easier for the patrons to seek information about their ongoing casino events. These casinos are optimally using the Internet to promote their casino events, whereas casino websites in Korea does not fully draw on the benefits of a well-designed website. As a result, 7 out of 11 casino websites from Korea had organized events, but only 4 of the remaining casino websites from Korea had provided event detail on the Internet. Moreover, Korea websites may sometimes have some information missing from their English translated pages. In conclusion, we think that Korea did not provide the sufficient amount of information details about their events on their websites in contrast to the other countries in East and South Asia. As a result, we can conclude that the events are well organized in terms of their success and their details on their official webpages.

Based on our content analysis results we can notice that among the total 138 casinos that we have researched, we found out that there were 114 casinos (83%) that organize events. Our research shows that majority of the 114 casinos frequently organize Catering & Banquet events since 93 out of the 114 casinos (82%) do that based on their websites information. Additionally, there were also 73 business events (64%) and 68 special events (60%) including local events, major events, and hallmark events that were organized out of the 114 casinos. We have also found out that local events are the most favored among the 3 organized events in East and South Asia. According to our research data, we found out that all of the countries we have investigated in East and South Asia rarely host exhibition events, with Singapore as an exception as they are the only country that has organized all of the categories under special events that we have researched. We can conclude that Singapore's casino can satisfy all types of patrons, due to the fact that they have multiple varieties of organized events.

4.1 Practical implications and contribution

Large organizations in the gaming industry that are constantly working with integrated resorts and standalone casinos will find our research helpful as it will give insightful data as well as suggestions to improve their efficiency in their website design along with statistical data about the events of casinos in East and South Asia. Furthermore, managers who are working in a casino, or plan to research about the differences of events between casinos in South East Asia can refer to our research data. Event organizers can refer to our content analysis for statistical data about the organized events throughout East and South Asia. With the information, event organizers can determine whether a country is applicable for a specific event or not. Apart from that, they can also organize events to suffice the lack of events in the specific country. Apart from that, they can also organize events to suffice the lack of events in the specific country. Our research data can also be used worldwide, for example a comparison between

European casino events and East and South Asian casino events.

The findings of this study have important implications for casino and event management academics. As this is the first research that examines how casinos develop and implement different types of events in East and South Asia it can be of great value from theoretical point of view. It can be a starting point for academics to expand and investigate deeper how casinos and events interrelate to each other.

5 CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research investigated certain gaps of differences and similarities between events holdings in South and East Asian casinos. Under our analysis and observations, we can find out the areas of which South and East Asian casinos lack, whereas areas that put them ahead in the casino event industry. The main contribution of this research is that it examines the ease of use, efficiency, type of events and many more of the casino websites under East and South of Asia. We then allocated scores into a self-created website evaluation. We constructed the website evaluation tool to judge if the websites are reliable enough to give us information about events. A content analysis was then created to make an in depth evaluation of the different types of events that are developed in casinos around the area. We have undergone the process of evaluating 138 East and South Asian casino websites with our website evaluation tool while researching about the different types of events that are organized inside a casino to uncover the gaps they have. Using the results, we have constructed a content analysis and created several tables to calculate the mean and average of events on each and every casino website. Based on an extensive literature review we develop four research questions. First research question examined the structure of the website and how developed it is. Our results indicates that the overall score of the websites were well above average, which means that they provide ease of use for their customers as well as security. Our second research question is how well East and South Asia casinos present their websites to their customers. After a throughout analysis with our website evaluation tool, we concluded that the websites had good visual coloring and fonts, but with poor translations due to English being their second language. The third research questions gives us insight on the types of events organized in East and South Asian casinos, and whether they organize similar events. In this case, we constructed a content analysis to find out the similarities and differences of organized events. Our results indicated that many events were similar between East and South Asia, with a few countries lacking in some areas. This leads us to the fourth research questions, the gaps we can find in casino events. We can conclude that the gaps of events between casinos are relatively different from each other depending on the country.

We realized that one of our main limitations to this project is the inability to travel to specific casinos around East and South Asia to conduct our research and data collecting. However, in the academic segment of our research, articles and journals about casino event management were scarce on

the Internet. Moreover, our members have encountered numerous problems with the casino websites. Apart from broken hyperlinks, we realized that most websites have different options to choose from depending on the language, and that sparked some issues. Although there were some problems with websites we still consider them reliable enough to support our study. In the future more in depth research is needed for each country with on site visit and investigation.

Our research data has allowed us to provide a few suggestions to improve the quality and productivity when organizing events based on our results.

1. We suggest that East and South Asia's casinos should organize more exhibition events as there are few exhibition events that are organized by the casinos. We also think that if more exhibitions are organized, more patrons would be interested.

2. Furthermore, Laos and the Philippines should be more productive in the organizing of events along with different categories of events, because these 2 countries rarely host any events. If they do not increase their event productivity, we think that they will lose out to the other countries around South East Asia in terms of economy and tourism.

3. Besides that, Macau, Malaysia, and Cambodia should have the availability to hold more wedding events in their casinos as that can be seen as a new market for them to expand to.

4. Additionally, the casino websites of Indonesia can be improved by redesigning it for the ease of use, because they have a good number of events organized, but we discovered that the information and placement of their events are not easy to find.

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